

JAN 20 2012

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that many youth entering
2 foster care exhibit chronic health, developmental, and
3 psychiatric disorders. The legislature also finds that mental
4 health and medical care needs of youth in foster care can differ
5 from youth not in care. One 2003 study found that eighty per
6 cent of youth in foster care received services for mental health
7 issues during foster care placement. Another study found that
8 fifty-four per cent of former foster youth had a mental health
9 diagnosis after leaving foster care. The same study also found
10 that one-third of former foster youth lacked health insurance.

11 The legislature further finds that former foster youth
12 without health insurance lack access to crucial medical
13 services, including mental health care, reproductive health
14 services, and prescription drug coverage. Lack of health
15 insurance may result in high levels of emergency room and
16 inpatient care, the progression of chronic disease, and
17 thousands of dollars of medical debt, all of which can be



1 devastating to former foster youth transitioning to independent
2 lives after foster care.

3 The purpose of this Act is to require the department of
4 human services to automatically enroll former foster youth in an
5 appropriate medical assistance program and automatically re-
6 enroll former foster youth until they reach age twenty-six.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
8 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
9 and to read as follows:

10 **"§346- Medical assistance for former foster youth. (a)**

11 A former foster youth who has reached the age of majority shall
12 be eligible for medical assistance as administered by the
13 department. The department shall automatically enroll the
14 former foster youth in an appropriate medical assistance
15 program, and shall provide automatic re-enrollment until the
16 former foster youth reaches the age of twenty-six.

17 (b) Upon enrollment, the department shall notify the
18 former foster youth of enrollment and provide written
19 instructions for accessing medical care.

20 (c) The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter
21 91 to effectuate the purposes of this section."

22 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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Report Title:

Former Foster Youth; Medical Assistance; Keiki Caucus

Description:

Requires the department of human services to automatically enroll former foster youth in an appropriate medical assistance program and automatically re-enroll former foster youth until they reach age twenty-six.

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